

Excerpts from the *EMS Education Agenda for the Future: A Systems Approach*

In 1996, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) published the highly regarded consensus document titled the *EMS Agenda for the Future*, commonly referred to as the *Agenda*. This was a federally funded position paper completed by the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) in conjunction with the National Association of State EMS Directors (NASEMSD). The intent of the *Agenda* was to create a common vision for the future of EMS. This document was designed for use by government and private organizations at the national, state, and local levels to help guide planning, decision making, and policy regarding EMS. The *Agenda* addressed 14 attributes of EMS, including the EMS education system

The *Agenda* provided the following overall vision for EMS in the future:

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) of the future will be community-based health management that is fully integrated with the overall health care system. It will have the ability to identify and modify illness and injury risks, provide acute illness and injury care and follow-up, and contribute to treatment of chronic conditions and community health monitoring. This new entity will be developed from redistribution of existing health care resources and will be integrated with other health care providers and public health and public safety agencies. It will improve community health and result in a more appropriate use of acute health care resources. EMS will remain the public's emergency medical safety net.

In December 1996, NHTSA convened an EMS Education Conference with representatives of more than 30 EMS-related organizations to identify the next logical *Agenda* implementation steps for the EMS community. The outcome of this meeting is broadly summarized by the following recommendations:

- The *National EMS Education and Practice Blueprint* (the *Blueprint*) is a valuable component of the EMS education system. It should be revised by a multi disciplinary panel, led by NHTSA, to more explicitly identify core educational content for each provider level.
- National EMS Education Standards are necessary, but need not include specific declarative material or lesson plans. NHTSA should support and facilitate the development of National EMS Education Standards.
- The *Blueprint* and National EMS Education Standards should be revised periodically (major revision every 5 to 7 years, minor updates every 2 to 3 years).

In January 1998, NHTSA formed a Blueprint Modeling Group to develop procedures for revising the *Blueprint*. During their initial deliberations, the group determined that the *Blueprint* should be only one component of a more comprehensive EMS education system of the future. Consequently, they changed their name to the EMS Education Task Force. They expanded their goal to include defining both the elements of the education system and the interrelationships necessary to achieve the vision of the *Agenda*. This document, the *EMS Education Agenda for the Future: A Systems Approach (Education Agenda)*, is the result of their deliberations.

The *Education Agenda* is a vision for the future of EMS education, and a proposal for an improved structured system to educate the next generation of EMS professionals. The *Education Agenda* builds on broad concepts from the 1996 *Agenda* to create a vision for an education system that will result in improved efficiency for the national EMS education process. This system will enhance consistency in education quality and ultimately lead to greater entry level graduate competence.

The *Education Agenda* was developed by a task force representing the full range of professions involved in EMS education, including EMS administrators, physicians, regulators, educators, and providers. This document proposes an education system with five integrated primary components:

- National EMS Core Content
- National EMS Scope of Practice Model
- National EMS Education Standards
- National EMS Education Program Accreditation
- National EMS Certification